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TERRIFIC FIRE AT CHARLESTON

Almost Total Destruction of the Business Portion of the City.

Banks, Hotels, Newspaper Offices, Machine Shops, Stores, Churches, Theatres, Saloons, Warehouses, Cannon and Shell Factories, Dwelling Houses in Ruins.

Ten Millions of Property Destroyed.

All Said to be the Work of Negroes in Insurrection.

The Reported Outbreak Among the Slaves in the State.

Terrible Consternation Among the People.

SKETCH OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON.

ITS PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

NAMES OF SOME OF THE SUFFERERS.

The Fire Raging at the Last Accounts.

OUR MAP OF THE BURNT DISTRICT.

OUR FORTRESS MONROE DESPATCHES.

Fortress Monroe, Dec. 13, 1861.

The Norfolk Day Book of to-day gives the following startling intelligence:

BRANCHVILLE, S. C., (80 Miles from Charleston), Dec. 12, 1861. Passengers who have just arrived here report a destructive fire last night at Charleston.

The fire commenced in Charleston last night (Dec. 11), at nine o'clock, in Ruzel & Co.'s saw factory, at the foot of Broad street, and communicated to the opposite side of Broad, to Cameron & Co.'s machine shops.

Under the impulse thus given and a stiff breeze, with a small supply of water, the conflagration assumed a formidable character, nearly equaling the most extensive conflagration on the American continent.

The Theatre, Play-house, opposite the Express office, the old Executive Building, and all the houses between that point and Queen street, are burned. The whole of one side of Broad street is destroyed, from Colonel Gadsden's residence to Mayock street. A considerable portion of the city, from East Bay to King street, is destroyed. Among the prominent buildings burned are the Institute and St. Andrew's hall, Theatre, Catholic cathedral and the Circular church.

At last accounts from Charleston, up to five this morning (Dec. 12), the fire had crossed Broad street, and was sweeping furiously on.

The telegraph lines to Charleston are down, consequently we are not able to state whether the fire has ceased or not.

BRANCHVILLE, Dec. 12—5 P. M.

The fire is still raging. A thousand homeless persons are huddled in the streets.

The express train left Augusta this afternoon with provisions to supply the wants of the sufferers, and men to assist in controlling the fire.

The fire was the work of an incendiary.

FORTRESS MONROE, Dec. 13.

A flag of truce under command of Captain Millward took Mr. Eddy, of North Carolina, to Craney Island to-day.

A telegraphic despatch to the Norfolk Day Book of to-day, from Charleston, S. C., states that a fire broke out in the city on Wednesday night, which was supposed to have been the work of an incendiary.

At the date of the last despatch, five o'clock Thursday afternoon, the fire was still burning. The Theatre on Meeting street, the Institute and other public buildings are stated to have been destroyed. The fire swept across Broad street. Assistance was sent from Augusta.

FORTRESS MONROE, Dec. 13, 1861.

An incendiary fire broke out in Charleston at nine o'clock on the evening of the 11th.

At five o'clock the next day it was still raging. Nearly all that part of the city from Broad street on to South, East Bay street on the east, and King on the west, is said to be destroyed, including the Catholic Cathedral, the Circular Church, Institute, St. Andrew's hall, the Theatre and Executive Rooms.

An extra train had left Augusta with supplies for the sufferers—thousands of whom roamed the streets—and assistance to fight the fire.

It is supposed to be a negro insurrection, though this view of the case is excluded from the despatches.

OUR BALTIMORE DESPATCHES.

BALTIMORE, Dec. 14, 1861.

The Old Point boat brings the report of the discovery and prompt suppression by the military authorities of a negro insurrection at Charleston.

The account states that the plot was disclosed by the spy servant of a military officer, who said that the negroes of the city were to be joined by large bands of negroes from the country, who were to come in armed at night. He said that the saw factory had been fired by a free negro, whom he designated and who has been arrested.

A small quantity of arms had been found under the door of a negro cabin. They were all new and in good order. In other negro cabins knives and hatchets were found secreted.

The greatest consternation prevailed. Families were closing and barring their windows.

The fire companies being composed of men who are engaged on military duty elsewhere, the fire engines

THE DOOMED CITY OF CHARLESTON, S. C.

Map of Charleston, South Carolina, Showing the Burnt District, December 11 and 12, 1861.



NOTES OF REFERENCE.

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|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1—Custom House and Post Office. | 6—Telegraph office. | 11—Hibernian Hall. | 16—Secession Hall. | 20—St. Andrew's Hall. |
| 2—Circular Church. | 7—Bank of State of South Carolina. | 12—Mills House. | 17—The Market or Circular Church. | 21—Cathedral. |
| 3—Union Bank. | 8—City Hall and Mayor's Office. | 13—Governor's Headquarters. | 18—Charleston Hotel. | 22—Bank of Charleston. |
| 4—Mercury office (in Broad street). | 9—Gildard House (Police Headquarters). | 14—Adams' Express Office. | 19—Faville Hotel. | 23—Railroad Bank. |
| 5—S. C. Courtenay's Newspaper Agency. | 10—Court House. | 15—Theatre. | | |

were worked by negroes, who broke and rendered useless the two best ones.

The offices of the Courier and Mercury are said to be destroyed.

Another account states that negro insurrections broke out in the suburbs of South Carolina two days before the fire and are still raging unchecked; but this last report is not well authenticated.

BALTIMORE, Dec. 14, 1861.

Outside reports say that the fire at Charleston originated in the mill on Broad street; also that the Mills House and the Roman Catholic Cathedral were destroyed. One report of the fire at Charleston says that it broke out in a saw factory, and that engines were sent from Savannah, Columbia and Augusta to subside it, but arrived too late to stay the conflagration.

There are flying rumors of a negro insurrection at Charleston, but nothing definite is known.

THE BURNT DISTRICT.

This portion of Charleston comprises the most compact and all the business parts of the city, except some wholesale houses northward. Nearly all the public buildings were consumed; and, should the fire extend in the direction in which it was moving at last accounts, it would sweep the entire of the fashionable residences down to Ashley river. It appears that the docks and warehouses along the Cooper river had not been touched, owing to the wind blowing from that direction. But the fire had crossed the eastern side of Broad street, and should it proceed in that direction the destruction would be immense, as very many of the buildings are frame in that quarter. The city generally contains so many frame buildings as to partly account for the extensive nature of the conflagration. The high wind did the rest.

Among the buildings included in the burnt district are two fine foundries, one of them lately engaged in the manufacture of cannon, and the other in making cannon balls and shells. Several churches and nearly all the public buildings, banks and insurance offices became a prey to the flames. King street is the chief street of the city, and was the Broadway of Charleston, though not much improved in its buildings. Broad street was a very important street, containing newspaper offices, banks, insurance offices, stores, &c. There is no evidence of the fire having extended south of the Post Office, in Broad street. East Bay street contained all the offices of the cotton factors and leading commission merchants. It is the nearest street to Cooper river, running parallel with it. The short streets which run down from it to

the docks also contain important offices and ware houses. Meeting street contains the Mills House, Charleston Hotel, Institute Hall, the Market and the Theatre. The Market, which stands upon the eastern side of Meeting street, is but partially seen in our view, the main building alone being shown, the other buildings connected with it extending back to the water. The different departments are devoted to beef, vegetable, fruit and fish, and are separate and commodious. The main building is of stone, and was erected in 1841. The front is adorned with very elaborate iron railings and lantern posts. Elaborate iron work, in the way of railings, fences and gateways, is a peculiarity a stranger notices in Charleston, and in many instances they have a very graceful and picturesque effect. In the earlier portions of the day the market has a very busy appearance, the commodious street on either side being crowded with human beings, boats and birds. To a stranger, from the North particularly, the birds are not the least interesting thing being buzzards, the self-appointed scavengers of warm climates. They are nearly as large as a turkey, and are tame, familiar and grotesque to the last degree. They surround the market, particularly at the closing in the afternoon, when everything not sold must be cleared out, hopping and skipping in the street and on the sidewalks in a manner peculiarly their own, or resorting on all the eaves and chimney tops when they have gorged themselves, or there is nothing more for them to eat. They are looked upon by the inhabitants as a necessary evil, and are protected by law. On the opposite side of the street, a little to the south of the market, is the New or Charleston Theatre. It is simple and unpretentious in its appearance, but quite commodious and well adapted to theatrical purposes. Meeting street presents many other fine public and private edifices, scattered among many buildings of early date. Meeting and King are the longest streets in the city, running from the South Battery, south and northwesterly, through the entire length of Charleston.

In fact there and the adjoining streets comprised the very heart of the city, which is now burned out.

THE PROPERTY DESTROYED.

The Public Buildings, Banks and Business Houses in the Burnt District—Names of Some of the Sufferers.

The following is a partial list of the buildings destroyed, with the names of the firms and merchants occupying the business portion of them:

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

Charleston Theatre, Meeting street.
Institute Hall, Meeting street.
Hibernian Hall, Meeting street.
St. Andrew's Hall, Broad street.
Market Buildings, Market street.
Catholic cathedral, Broad street.
Circular church, Meeting street.
BANKS, SAVINGS INSTITUTIONS AND INSURANCE COMPANIES.
Bank of Charleston, Broad street.
Bank of South Carolina, Broad street.
Union Bank, East Bay.
Planters' and Mechanics' Bank, East Bay.
Southwestern Railroad Bank, Broad street.
Farmers' and Exchange Bank, Broad street.
Bank of the State of South Carolina, Broad street.
Charleston Savings Institution, Meeting street.
Falmouth Savings Institution, Meeting street.
Charleston Insurance and Trust Co., Broad street.
South Carolina Insurance Co., East Bay.
Fire Insurance Co., Broad street.
Citizens Insurance Co., Broad street.

HOVELS.

Mills House, Meeting street.
Charleston Hotel, Meeting street.
Planters' Hotel, State street.

NEWSPAPER OFFICES.

Charleston Mercury office, Broad street.
Charleston Courier office, East Bay.

MERCANTILE HOUSES.

Stevenson & Co., druggists, 23 Hayne street.
W. N. Hughes, books, 67 Meeting street.
S. G. Courtenay, stationery, 9 Broad street.
A. Ashurst, & Co., druggists, Market street.
Williams & Price, hardware, Hayne street.
Courtenay & Tennant, hardware, Hayne street.
Egleston & Co., clothing, Hayne street.
J. S. & L. Bove & Co., dry goods, Meeting street.
James H. Taylor, insurance, Broad street.
Crane, Baylston & Co., dry goods, Meeting street.
Hamilton & Smith, groceries, Market street.
T. M. Ceter, groceries, Vendue range.
Tobias & Co., commission merchants, East Bay.
Charles & Co., hardware, East Bay.
Horsely, Anson & Co., hats, Hayne street.
Street & West, grocers, East Bay.
Chafin, Craft & Chafin, grocers, East Bay.
Jeffries & Co., groceries, East Bay.
Hayne & Laton, West India goods, East Bay.
G. W. Williams & Co., groceries, Hayne street.

Z. B. Oakes, groceries, State street.

Webb & Sage, crockery, Meeting street.
A. S. Hall & Co., tailors, Meeting street.
E. B. Stanford & Co., shoes, Meeting street.
Horton & Shepherd, clothes, Meeting street.
Adams & Benson, stores, Broad street.
Caldwell, Mackenzie & Co., dry goods, East Bay.
Pierson, Smith & Co., clothing, Hayne street.
Cameron & Co., iron foundry, Broad street.
Hyde, Gregg & Co., hardware, Meeting street.
Dunham, Tait & Co., shoes, Hayne street.
Dewing, Thayer & Co., fancy goods, Meeting street.
Bowen, Foster & Co., straw goods, Meeting street.
Jennings, Tomlinson & Co., clothing, Meeting street.
D. F. Fleming & Co., hats, Hayne street.
H. H. Fanning & Co., hats, Hayne street.
F. D. Fanning & Co., hats, Hayne street.
Waldron, Egleston & Co., clothing, Hayne street.
Fores & Mitchell, shoes, Hayne street.
Nelson Carter, druggist, Hayne street.
Gibbs & Howell & Co., dry goods, Hayne street.
Hoskins & Walton, shoes, Meeting street.
H. F. Strickland, hardware, Meeting street.
Marshall, Borge & Co., fancy goods, Meeting street.
Furness Bros. & Co., groceries, East Bay.
Egleston, Richards & Co., tailors, Broad street.
C. D. Carr & Co., tailors, Broad street.
Chamberlin, Miller & Co., dry goods, Hayne street.
R. Douglas & Co., stationery, Hayne street.
G. Follen, groceries, Meeting street.
Johnson, Criss & Co., dry goods, Hayne street.
McCart & Dawson, books, Meeting street.
Walker, Evans & Co., stationery, Broad street.

MISCELLANEOUS SKETCHES.

The public market was situated in Market street, through the centre of which it extended from Meeting street to the river, a distance of about one fourth of a mile. In its construction it resembled the famous market of Philadelphia, and was built with brick piers at intervals, over which the roof was thrown.

Institute Hall, or, as it was familiarly known in Charleston, Seedecker's Hall, was located in Meeting street, and was the headquarters of the Democratic Presidential Convention which met in that city in May, 1860.

St. Andrew's Hall was situated in Broad street, and was the headquarters of Fernando Wood's delegation in the days of the Convention.

Hibernian Hall was situated in Meeting street, and is famous as the spot where the South Carolina ordinance of secession was passed, in December, 1860. As the four

tain head of the present rebellion its destruction seems ominous to the rebel cause.

The hotels destroyed were of brick, with stucco facings in imitation of stone. The Mills House—the largest in the State—was situated on Meeting street, and kept by Messrs. Nickerson & Purcell. The Charleston Hotel, next in importance, was also in Meeting street, and kept by George G. Mixer. The Planters' Hotel (second class) was on State street.

The Catholic cathedral, on Broad street, was a handsome edifice of brown stone.

The Circular church, on Meeting street, was of brick, with stone front.

The theatre was on Broad street, built of brick, and under the name of G. F. Marchant.

The iron foundry of Cameron & Co., recently used for the manufacture of shot, shell, &c., was on Broad street, near its junction with East Bay, and was among the first buildings destroyed.

The Post Office and Custom House are located at the foot of Broad street, and on the eastern side of East Bay, so that it is probable they have escaped the fire, not without some damage, perhaps, from the intense heat.

The City Hall and Court House are located at the corner of Meeting and Broad streets, in a small park, similar to the City Hall Park of New York, and have most probably for that reason escaped destruction.

The office of Mordcau & Co., agents of the Havana line of steamships, is situated east of East Bay, and there three fine steamships without doubt. Mordcau, it will be remembered, contributed the sum of \$10,000 to the rebel war finance.

In extent the fire, so far as known, embraced a district of the city over one half a mile long by one fourth wide. A familiar idea of the area will be obtained when we state that it embraced a space equal to that in New York city bounded by Wall street on the South, Rockwood street on the North, Broadway on the West and the East river.

THE CITY OF CHARLESTON.

This city is the largest in South Carolina, and is built on a peninsula or tongue of land between the Ashley and Cooper rivers, which unite below the town and form a spacious harbor, communicating with the ocean at St. John's Island, seven miles distant. Both harbor and city resemble New York and its bay in miniature. There is this striking difference, that the portion of Charleston called the Battery, and corresponding to our Battery and to State street, is the most fashionable part of the city; whereas in New York this is reversed. Cooper and Ashley rivers are from thirty to fifty feet deep—Cooper being 1,400 yards wide and Ashley 2,100. The city is regularly built, and extends nearly two miles in length, and a mile and a half in breadth. Some of the streets are from sixty to seventy feet broad, and some are narrow—for instance, King street, the Broadway of Charleston. Many of the houses are built of brick, and in a style of elegance, particularly around the Battery; but a large number are of wood, some of them neatly painted, as in Brooklyn, but more of them very dingy, and inhabited by the negroes. The streets run mostly parallel to each other, reaching across from river to river, and intersected longitudinally nearly at right angles. They are shaded with the Palms of India and other beautiful trees. Several of the houses are embowered in a profusion of foliage and flowers. Many of the dwellings have piazzas and are ornamented with vines and creepers, while the gardens attached to them bloom with the orange, the peach and other trees, and shrubs in great variety.

The population in 1850 was 42,983, of which 14,692 were slaves.

The chief exports are cotton and rice. The average crop of Sea Island cotton in South Carolina is 23,600 bales, about two-thirds of which come to Charleston, the remainder to Savannah.

The rice crop of the State is 120,000, of which Charleston receives nearly all. In 1861 Charleston exported 24,761 bales of Sea Island cotton, 463,276 bales of upland cotton, 123,064 bushels of rough rice, about as much cleaned rice, and 23,841,620 feet of lumber. Since the opening of railroad communication between Charleston and the West the city had become the centre of an important trade in flour. The quantity received in 1853 amounted to 80,000 barrels. Charleston exported more rice than any other city in the Union, and was surpassed only by New Orleans and Mobile in the exportation of cotton. The imports were only about one-eighth of the exports.

Charleston was formerly extensively engaged in ship-building; but of late this business has very much declined. The shipping of the port in 1862 amounted to 22,526 tons registered, or 19,610 tons enrolled and licensed.

The great extent of railroads that open communication with the interior affords Charleston superior advantages for inland trade.

The city of Charleston is one of the oldest in the United States, having been founded in 1670. Its population was recruited some years afterwards by Huguenot refugees, who emigrated from France and settled in pretty considerable numbers in South Carolina. From this stock many of the first families of that region now claim to be descended. It was not till 1783 that it was incorporated as a city. Fifty-two years previously, in 1731, it contained six hundred houses and five churches, and a thriving business was done in its port. During the Revolutionary War the possession of the harbor of Charleston was the object of more than one British expedition. A garrison of 400 on Sullivan's Island, under command of Colonel Moultrie, achieved great distinction by the repulse, on 28th June, 1778, of a British squadron of nine ships of war. On the 12th of May, 1790, the city was surrendered to Sir Henry Clinton by General Lincoln, the Corporation and principal inhabitants refusing to co-operate in its defence, and offering to acknowledge the sovereignty of Great Britain. The British held it till May, 1792. It contained some thirty churches, a theatre, seven at excellent hotels, cotton presses and factories, engine and machine factories, shipyards and a large dry dock. Its banks and other mercantile corporations enjoyed a high reputation until the secession nearly brought the stream open to the city and all its institutions. It has suffered greater disaster by fire than almost any other city in the United States. In 1778 there were 252 houses consumed; in 1795 nearly a third of the city was destroyed, involving loss of property to the amount of \$2,500,000. Again, in the great fire of 1838, the loss was estimated at \$5,000,000.

It will be remembered that the National Democratic Convention of 1860 was held in Charleston, but was, from political and other causes, adjourned to Baltimore. The secession of the ultra proslavery elements which took place in the first annual city convention in the other place, and by that time Mr. Breckinridge was nominated for the Presidency, as against Mr. Douglas, who received the regular nomination. This disruption of the democratic party, which was, in reality, a part of the scheme of the secessionists, paved the way to the great events that have since followed—the election of Mr. Lincoln; the secession of South Carolina, followed by that of other Southern States; the inauguration of the rebellion by the outbreak of Fort Sumter and the bombardment of Fort Sumter; the blockade of the Southern ports; the marshalling of two hostile armies, reaching, in the aggregate, to probably a million of men, and the other momentous events that are a part of the history of the hour.